



News Release

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Proactive Maintenance of A1C Reduces Risk of Diabetes-Related Complications

*“YOU CAN’T GO BACK IN TIME,” A NEW CAMPAIGN, ENCOURAGES PEOPLE WITH
DIABETES TO CONTROL THEIR A1C LEVEL*

(SALT LAKE CITY, UT) -- The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) Diabetes Prevention and Control Program launched a new awareness campaign for people with diabetes aimed at highlighting the importance of controlling their A1C number. The campaign provides information about proactively monitoring and reducing A1C levels. For most people with diabetes, the A1C goal is less than 7.

The A1C is a simple blood test that reflects a person's average blood glucose level over a three-month period. The A1C number gives patients a good indication of how well their overall diabetes treatment plan is working – the higher the A1C level, the higher the risk of developing diabetes-related complications. Based on the A1C number, a patient's physician can then make recommendations regarding medications and healthy lifestyle choices, such as nutrition and physical activity, that influence and help decrease A1C levels.

Todd Wente, a diabetes patient from Odgen, says, "My A1C drives my next 90 days of behavior change. If it's creeping up, I know I need to make changes. If it stays the same, I know I need to keep working at it. And, if it's lower than my goal, I know I can keep doing what I'm doing."

To improve knowledge of the A1C test, the campaign focuses on the concept of taking proactive measures before complications arise. To accomplish this task, the TV spot implements the unique approach of “reverse film.”

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The actor featured in the TV advertisements memorized phonetic intonations of the script in reverse. Then, he actually spoke backwards (while moving forward) during the filming. In the final production phase, both film and audio were reversed, resulting in the effect of the actor moving in reverse, while essentially “speaking” forward. The final line, “you can’t go back in time,” highlights the importance of proactive A1C level control before complications spin out of control.

“Patients receive a lot of messages about diabetes and how to control their disease. We feel the need to shed light on the importance of patients knowing their own A1C levels,” stated Richard Bullough, PhD, Manager, Utah Diabetes Prevention and Control Program. “The concept of attempting to go back in time is a message of urgency, and while you literally cannot go back in time, you can stop, reflect on your own diabetes control, and move forward with an A1C goal.

A 2004 study conducted by the Health Plan Partnership (HPP) found that although 80% of their members with diabetes recall receiving A1C tests, only 50% knew their current A1C level or were aware of the recommended target of less than 7. However, many people with diabetes who are aware of the A1C and its implications find it a useful tool and motivator to be healthy.

Ordinarily, an A1C test is ordered by a physician, and should occur 2-4 times per year. People with diabetes should talk to their doctor about getting an A1C test and understanding the results. Additionally, although the A1C test is an important tool in glucose level control, it cannot and does not replace a patient’s need for daily blood glucose monitoring.

For additional A1C test information, and the importance of your level, call the UDOH Resource Line at 1-888-222-2542 or visit www.health.utah.gov/diabetes. To view both the ‘forward’ and ‘backward’ versions of “You Can’t Go Back In Time,” please visit the Web site.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public’s health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.